

## PARTICIPATING FAITH COMMUNITIES

**BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION** 

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ) IN VIRGINIA

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN Virlina District

EPISCOPAL CHURCH USA Diocese of Virginia Diocese of Southern Virginia Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA Metro Washington Synod Virginia Synod

## **JEWISH**

Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington Jewish Community Federation of Richmond Richmond Rabbinic Association

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) Presbytery of the James National Capital Presbytery Shenandoah Presbytery Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS** 

ROMAN CATHOLIC Diocese of Arlington

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Potomac Association

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Holston Conference Virginia Conference

VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

## PARTICIPATING RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

All Dulles Area Muslim Society
Arlington Interfaith Council
Catholic Charities of Arlington
Chaplain Services of the Churches
of Virginia
Church Women United
Church World Service/CROP
Conference Legislative Network
Islamic Center of Virginia
Seekers Christian Community
Stuart Circle Parish
United Methodist Women
Virginia Alliance of Baptists
Virginia Muslim Coalition
for Public Affairs



Ms. Monica Harvey Virginia Department of Environmental Quality 629 East Main Street P.O. Box 1105 Richmond, VA 23218 14 May 2007

Dear Ms. Harvey,

I always consider it an honor and privelege to speak out from the prespective of the faith on issues that affect God's creation and God's people. I speak on behalf of Virginia Interfaith Power and Light, a program of The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. I thank you for giving consideration to my words and feelings.

People of faith believe God has had some hand in creation. Some of us take a more scientific approach. Some of us take a more Biblically literal approach. But we all hold some belief in a creator God. And since we believe that God has been involved in creation, we are increasingly concerned about what is happening to God's creation. It is difficult to view Earth as God's creation while at the same time witnessing its destruction. God created you and me to be stewards of Earth, not abusers of Earth. God never gave creation to us. It remains and always has remained God's property, not ours. We are not at liberty to do whatever we please with God's creation.

In the case of the Potomac River Generation Station (Mirant), God's creation, including God's people, have suffered. Because emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) have not been adequately regulated, fine particulate matter (PM2.5) has caused health risks for residents of Alexandria. Asthma, cardiopulmonary, and other respitory ailments, even premature deaths have been attributed to poor air quality. The elderly and young children are particularly suceptible. Many residents of Alexandria have testified to these problems in their comments to you already. The sacrifice of human health, and especially human life itself, in the name of cheap electricity, is incompatible with the teachings of all faiths I know of. Mirant can do better.

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I urge you to issue a comprehensive permit that will regulate <u>all</u> pollutants, including fine particulate matter (PM2.5) to levels established by health-based standards in Alexandria and in the greater region affected by Mirant. It is incomprehensible, from a faith perspective, that God's people and God's creation suffer uneccessarily.

In addition, I urge you to establish a local control board in Alexandria. It is imperative that the residents of Alexandria have a voice in issues that effect their own health and it is only through local governance that that will happen.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rev. Pat Watkins

Staff Director Virginia Interfaith Power and Light

Environmental Policy Coordinator Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

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